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Facebook 'Sponsored Stories' settlement gets judge's tentative OK

By Jessica Guynn

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SAN FRANCISCO -- A federal judge has given preliminary approval to a \$20-million settlement of a lawsuit that claimed Facebook used members' names and likenesses to publicize products with its "Sponsored Stories" advertising feature without their permission, any compensation or any way to opt out, violating California law.

Users can claim a \$10 payment under the revised settlement. More than 120 million users may be eligible to file a claim. Any remaining funds after fees are paid to attorneys will go to advocacy groups.

U.S. District Judge Richard Seeborg rejected an earlier settlement proposal because it provided no payment to Facebook users even as lawyers for the plaintiffs could receive millions. He scheduled a hearing for June to consider final approval of the settlement.

"We are pleased that the court has granted preliminary approval of the proposed settlement," Facebook spokesman Andrew Noyes said in an emailed statement.

The lawsuit, filed in 2011 in San Francisco federal court, accuses the giant social network of violating state law by using the names, photographs and identities of users who clicked that they liked products without offering any compensation or a way to opt out.

As part of the settlement, Facebook has also agreed to give users more control over how their names and likenesses are used.

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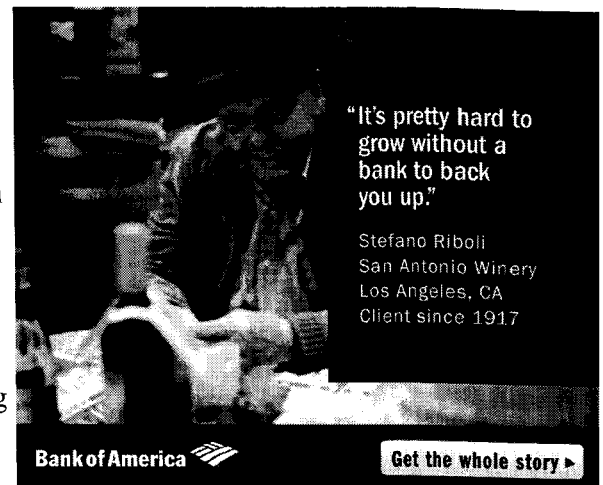
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